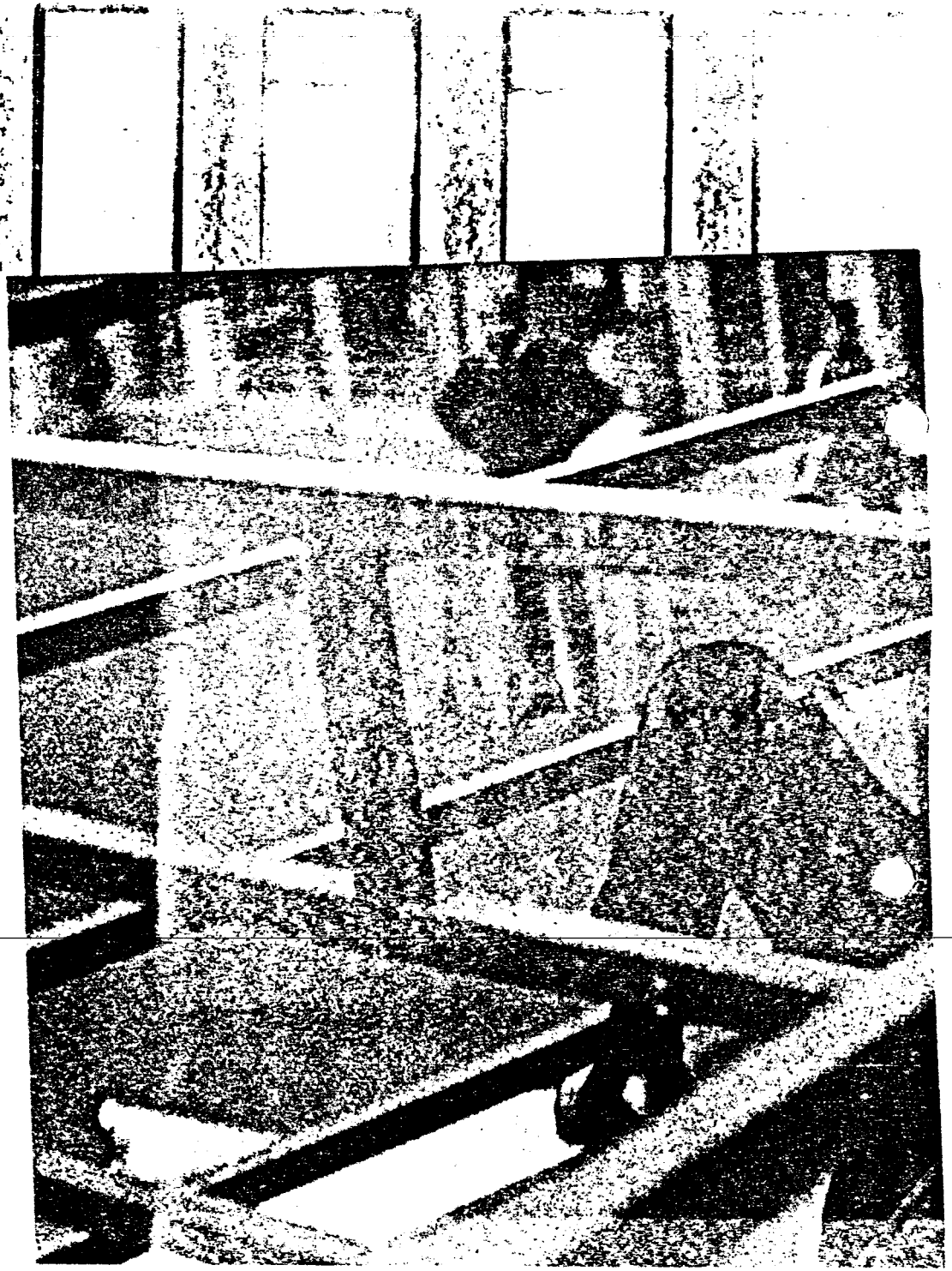
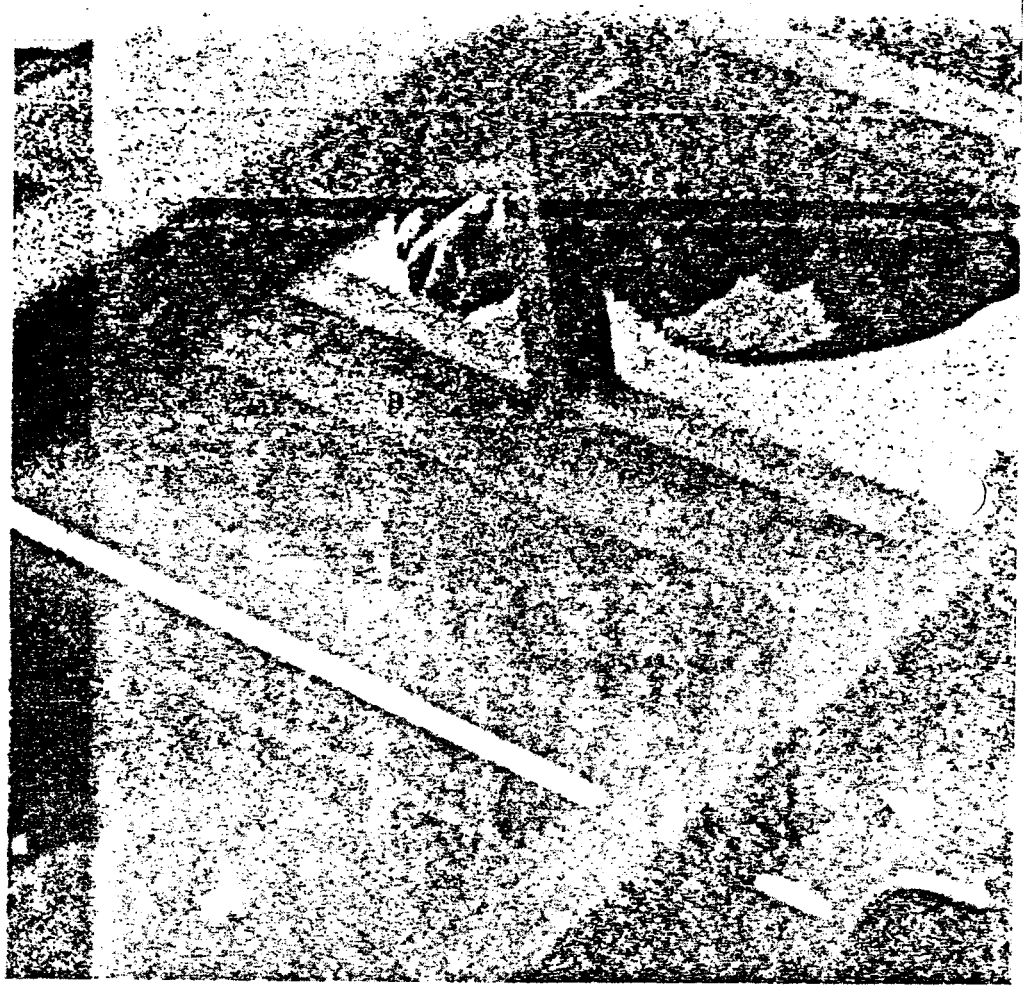
A week before his death, King led a march in Memphis

"I have a dream today . . . I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, every hill and mountain shall be made low. The rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places will be made straight. And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together. This is our hope. . . . With this faith we shall be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, to stand up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day. . . ."

Martin Luther King Jr. lived by this exalted dream of freedom for his people, and he died in Memphis for daring to have it. The awful striking down of



for the simple recognition of human dignity, and he maintained his convictions about the ultimate reconciliation of all men in the face of dreadful pressure from both black and white. His sense of the rightness of his cause was both ennobling and prophetic. "I accept this award," he said upon receiving the Nobel Prize for Peace in 1964, "in behalf of a civil rights movement which is moving with determination and a majestic scorn for risk and danger to establish a reign of freedom and a rule of justice." His own scorn for danger led him to his death, and it could not have really surprised him. The night before he died he told a cheering crowd in Memphis, "It really doesn't matter with me now, because I've been to the mountaintop." Dr. King had always faced death with the hopeful spirit of the words of a hymn he loved: *Free at last. Free at last. Thank God almighty, we are free at last.*



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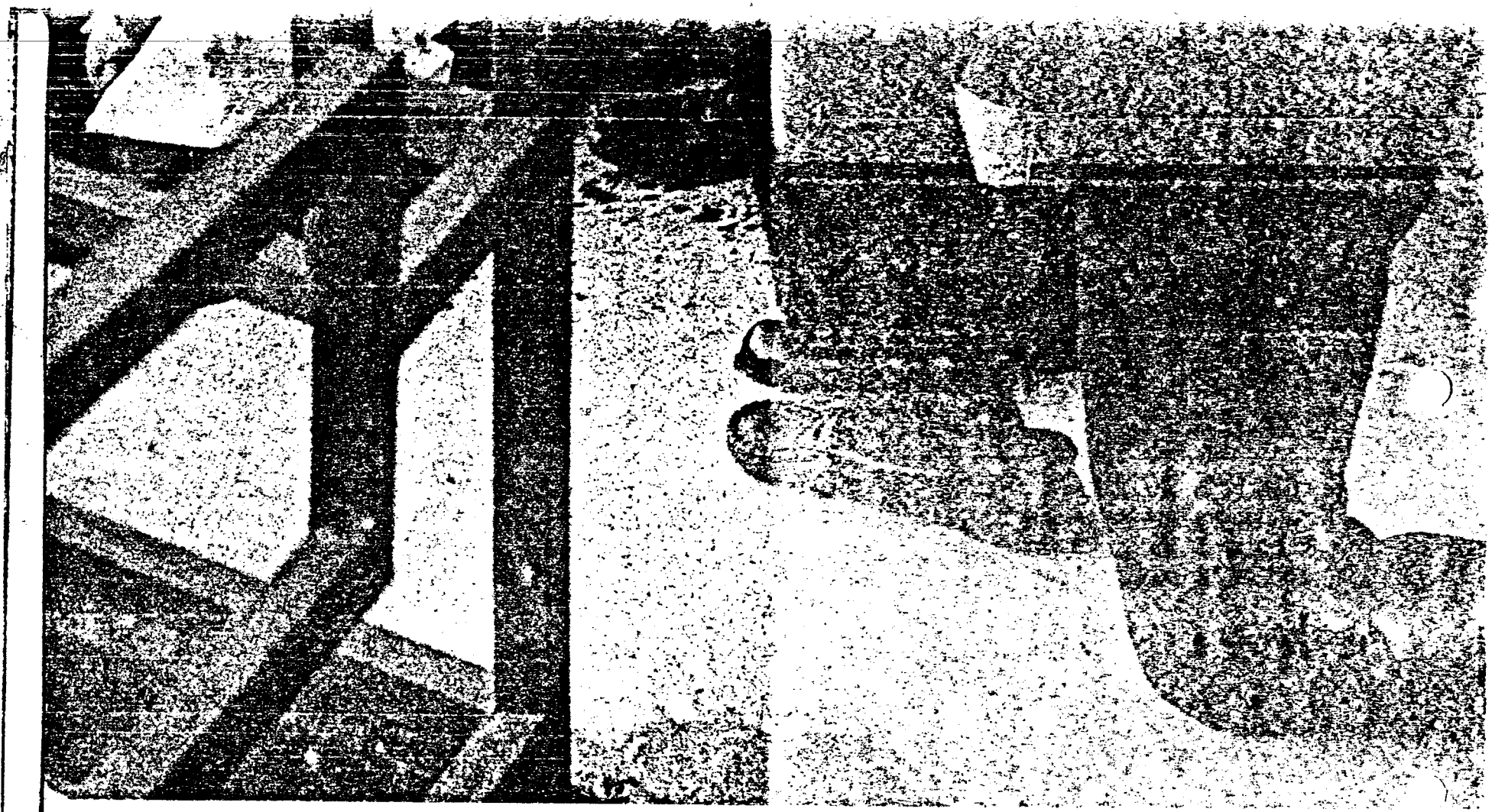

Futilely, aides kneel beside their dying leader. A minute before, standing on this balcony, King was felled by a single shot in the head.

mountaintop'

Photographs by JOSEPH LOUW

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